UFL NEWS

A Newsletter of the University Federation of Librarians, Berkeley Campus, AFT Local 1795
Representing librarians at the University of California, Berkeley

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LIBRARIANS NEED MORE TO READ

This first issue of the UFL NEWS is addressed to all the members of the Librarians' Bargaining Unit at Berkeley. Unless you are in a supervisory position not covered by the UC-AFT Librarians' contract, you are a member of the Bargaining Unit. Yes, you, whether or not you have joined the union, are covered by the terms of a three-year-old contract with the University of California. Do librarians need more to read? No, of course not. Everyday, we are reminded of how much printed matter there is for us to document, keep control of, organize, file, and just know about.

How much of it do we get to read?
How much do we want to read?
How much of it is useful to us?

We hope this newsletter will fit into that tiny percentage of usable information.

You may think that all the issues having to do with promotion, professional development, and one's status as a librarian on campus are taken care of by the Librarians' Association of the University of California. Yet the provisions of LAUC do not cover the so-called "bread and butter" issues that affect all people who work. In your relationship with the University of California as an employer, the union is there to bargain for your rights as a valued academic employee. It is the purpose of this newsletter to let you know what your rights are and to encourage you to become an active member of the Local.

If you were one of the librarians who lost their parking permits, if you would like to take a leave to conduct research (or for any other purpose), if you wonder how the University might handle the Holiday Shutdown of 1987, if you ever worried about "security of employment," then you need to read this newsletter.

The members of the Executive Committee of Local 1795 are librarians just like you.

Do we need more to read?

Yes!

We need to read your responses to what we report. We need your thoughts, and suggestions on how to improve the working conditions for librarians at Berkeley. Please use this newsletter to get your opinions out. Send comments to anyone on the Executive Committee.

THE 1986 HOLIDAY SHUTDOWN: Survey Results

In January 1987, UC-AFT conducted a survey of librarians in the UFL Bargaining Unit. Its "Survey on Holiday Shutdown" followed its December 1986 memo which advised librarians on several possible ways to handle their work schedules. Since about 38% of the librarians in the Bargaining Unit responded to the survey, the results are a good indication of how the shutdown was handled within the framework of the contract between the University and the UFL unit. Of the 49 surveys returned, 20 stated that the AFT memo was used by librarians at Berkeley to plan for the enforced shutdown. Other replies include:

-RESPONDENTS USING VACATION TIME FOR
All or Part of Shutdown Period: 34
Using Time Accrued Beforehand: 14
Working at Home: 8

-RESPONDENTS FOR WHOM ARRANGEMENT WAS
Voluntary: 46
Not Voluntary: 4

-RESPONDENTS FELT ARRANGEMENT WAS
Satisfactory: 41
Not Satisfactory: 6

-WORK ARRANGEMENT--
Was Worked Out on an Individual Basis Consulting with Supervisor: 35
Complied with a Blanket Policy for the Entire Unit: 12
Was Suggested by a Supervisor: 2

The overall tone of the results was that most of the librarians were satisfied with the way they handled the shutdown period.

(over)

A typical comment was: "I would have taken this time as vacation anyway." Some, however, voiced doubts about the options open to them: "...no alternative was presented and I feel that some hassle might have been required to make different arrangements." Some expressed real dissatisfaction: "...the lack of trust and professionalim implicit in the somewhat rigid alternatives just don't sit well... but I've come to accept this as part of UCB."

The AFT Local 1795 expects that the survey will aid in negotiating internal library administrative policies for future such situations. We feel that the relatively high rate of response shows that this issue is of importance to librarians at the Berkeley campus. Thank you to all who responded. [K.H., L.C]

CONTINUING PARKING SAGA

As you may recall, there are still six librarians with temporary campus parking permits. These six librarians are now in the midst of their third permit extensions! We have all been waiting for the report from the Campus Parking Committee that would hopefully clarify their situation. At the moment, the committee has missed two of its deadlines for this report, and now seems to not be meeting at all. The University Federation of Librarians (UFL) has requested official memos on the current status of the committee and regarding our request that a librarian be appointed to this committee. As soon as we get additional information, we will inform everyone. [S.H.]

UFL News is produced by the Executive Committee of the University Federation of Librarians, Berkeley Campus, AFT Local 1795, a part of University Council-AFT, representing Faculty, Librarians and Academic Researchers of the University of California. Members of the Executive Committee are

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THINKING ABOUT 1987 CONTRACT REOPENERS

Three years have elapsed since the signing of the librarian's contract with the University. Each spring, we have conducted negotiations about a limited number of proposed modifications, and for the last two years have agreed to extend the duration of the overall contract. Originally scheduled to expire in 1986, it is now in effect until June 1988. This spring, we will have a round of reopened negotiations sometime in April or May.

During "reopeners," the articles on salaries and benefits are automatically open for discussion. In addition, each party may propose changes to three articles and submit one new article. The union was required to identify the articles it wished to discuss by March 1, so representatives met in Los Angeles on January 24th to decide what we wanted to propose.

A number of issues were brought up for discussion. These included but were not limited to:

Definition of a Librarian There are many cases throughout the state in which there are people doing work which is the same as that normally done by librarians, but are in other pay classifications. Even though they may have MLS degrees and be functioning as librarians, such individuals are not members of LAUC, do not have peer review, and are not covered by the contract.

Child care A significant number of librarians, especially women, encounter problems in arranging adequate day care for their children which does not interfere unduly with their own work schedules. Many of us would like to see the University provide convenient day care facilities to staff, either free or at reasonable rates.

Holiday Shutdowns There are still lots of complaints at several campuses--notably Berkeley--about the way about the way the holiday shutdown options have been described to librarians by representatives of library administration. At Berkeley, there has been repeated inconsistency in statements and memos from the University Librarian, the Personnel Officer, the Labor Relations Officer, and various department heads, and a general unwillingness to acknowledge that work schedule adjustments could allow some librarians to be off the days of the shutdown without having to use vacation leave or commit themselves to special work projects. There is also some annoyance at what seem to be unnecessary

degrees of formal, written reporting for any librarians who do choose to work at an alternative location during the shutdown period.

Parking This continues to be a pressing problem at Berkeley. Even though the cutback in eligiblity for central campus permits which excluded all Associate Librarians was largely ameliorated by the efforts of Campus Labor Relations and the Library Personnel Officer, so that by year's end only two of the Associate Librarians who wanted permits were not granted some kind of exception, there was still no assurance that we could count on the regular continuation of these special arrangements, and the general consensus among Berkeley librarians is that we still want all librarians to have central campus eligibility--clearly stated, in writing.

A second concern is that librarians who do not have central campus permits but are required to staff reference desks in the evenings sometimes have no way to conveniently park nearby on campus, where they can leave safely after dark. Even though some have departmental pool parking permits, we need to investigate the permanency of such arrangements and gain some assurance that continued parking at priority lots is provided for those who are required to work at public service desks as late as 10:00 p.m.

On the other campuses, the problem is more just a shortage of parking for everyone--Irvine's parking difficulties seemed particularly acute-- but many do have the problem of access to parking close enough to be safe when one must leave after dark.

Sabbaticals This is a fundamental perquisite associated with faculty status, and should be available to all librarians in academic libraries. Sabbaticals, or paid leaves, are vital to most faculty and academic professionals both for the time they provide for reading, research and writing, and as a way of refreshing one's intellectual roots and perspectives. Librarians in the CSU system are now entitled to sabbaticals on the same basis as other faculty, and a number have taken them during each of the last several years. --Bill Whitson, Moffitt Undergraduate Library

GRIEVING CAN GET YOU SOMEWHERE

During the last few months, the Executive and Grievance Committees have been busy dealing with grievances and other personnel matters. Advice has been provided to unit members on the preparation of documentation for upcoming merit and promotion reviews. Complaints were raised by unit members, ranging from lack of consultation and arbitrary actions by supervisors, reassignment of duties or job descriptions, violations of the contract, to more serious matters, e.g., a layoff. Typically, Grievance Committee members review complaints with the aggrieved unit member, explain contract and other rights, conduct investigations when necessary, and then suggest ways in which the problem might be resolved. Most problems brought to the attention of the Committee were resolved informally, but in several instances informal means did not work and formal grievances were filed. Several are currently pending. [P.H.]

BURNING ISSUES

A column of developing and unformed stories about union activities.

*The Library administration is currently, at our urging, studying the feasibility of monthly reporting for all types of leaves, i.e. sick leave and vacation leave. We expect to get a proposal for our comments soon.

*Union representatives have met recently with several library departments regarding procedures and requirements for librarians' schedules, flexible use of time and adjusted work weeks. We are pleased that in most cases, we have made considerable progress in helping to establish more professional schedules.

*We are currently initiating an investigation into two positions on this campus--i.e. whether or not they should be classified as librarian positions. In one case, we have requested further information on the assigned job responsibilities. In the second case, we have asked questions regarding future recruitment for a professional to fill the position.

*We are taking a look at the statistics on the use of professional development funds by librarians in 1986. We will be studying how funds were distributed to members of the Bargaining Unit.

SPECIAL TWO-MONTH LEAVES

One of the most interesting options made available to UC librarians with the librarians' contract in 1984 was the special two-month leave. While it is not a "right," as in the California State University system, it should nevertheless be readily available to most librarians. You simply have to request it at least 6 months in advance and work out a time which is agreeable to both you and your supervisor. The two months don't even have to be consecutive, if it is easier for you to get away for two separate months.

The leave does not have to be justified in the way a paid leave or sabbatical would. Although many librarians who take such leaves in the CSU system do use them to carry out professional projects, especially research and writing for publication, most simply use them for other personal activities. In our case, there is certainly no requirement that you engage in a work-related project! Whatever you do, the library stands to gain from the fresh perspective, new expertise and/or renewed energies with which you return!

The drawback, of course, is that you give up your salary for the two months, and do not accrue service credit toward retirement, sick leave or vacation leave. The University will, however, arrange to pay you in 12 equal checks over the year, so that you receive a paycheck each month, and any regular deductions can be covered. The University also pays your health, dental and vision care premiums the months you are off, so that your coverage is uninterrupted.

I have taken the two-month leaves for the last two years, the first time during January and February, and the second in May and June. In both cases, most of the time came during a less busy period of the year, and in both cases the library unit was able to use lapsing salary money to hire a temporary librarian.

I have been using the time simply to catch up on reading and various projects at home which otherwise go deferred year after year. The first time, I must admit, since I stayed in Berkeley, I did come in a number of times to check mail and approval plan books, and attend important meetings. Nonetheless, I enjoyed the time off immensely, and would recommend the idea to others. At this point in my life, I am forced to conclude that additional time is more important to me than the money I am giving up!

Have you considered the idea, or taken a leave yourself? I'd be interested in hearing from you. We plan to conduct a survey at some point, but at the moment are not really aware of how many other librarians have actually taken advantage of this option, or whether we need to propose changes in order to make the option more appealing or workable. --Bill Whitson, Moffitt Undergraduate Library

TO DUES OR NOT TO DUES

If you're thinking about joining us and are not sure how to go about it, or how much it will cost--here are some questions and answers that will help you:

Q: How much will it cost?
A: Dues are .0085 of salary and are adjusted when you receive a raise to this percentage of your new rate of pay.

Q: But what does it cost me in dollars?
A: For people at the Assistant Librarian level dues range from $10.00 a month to $16.00 a month. At the Associate Librarian level and full Librarian ranks dues range from about $16.00 a month to $38.00.

Q: Is it worth it?
A: Think of it as an insurance policy, as well as a contribution to an organization that is there to further your job security and benefits and to assist you with unforeseen problems.

Q: How do I sign up?
A: We make it relatively simple via monthly payroll deduction. Fill out the form and we will do the rest. If you would prefer not to go the payroll deduction route, you may send a check to the Secretary-Treasurer of Local #1795, 840 Sea View Drive, El Cerrito, CA 94720 for three, six or more months' dues. You will receive an acknowledgment and a receipt. As an added bonus union members who itemize may take a tax deduction.

Working part-time or retired? Retired memberships are $4.00 a month and part-timers have pro-rated dues according to your compensation.

Still not convinced? Talk to one of your professional colleagues who is a union member. [E.K.]